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ABSTRACT

This report discusses the emergence of a new geopolitical reality, that of countries in transition. Although the expression usually refers to former Communist countries, a closer analysis shows that transition is, in fact, a universal historical phenomenon. As used here, countries in transition must evidence the following factors: (1) the starting-point or initial state of transition; (2) the destination or the objectives pursued; and (3) the actual content of transition, i.e. the derived transformations. In-depth analyses are presented to provide greater understanding of the education policies of the countries in transition. The social, political, and psychological contexts of the education reforms are established to facilitate that understanding. The report is divided into two parts. Part 1, "Reforms, crises and transitions in Central and Eastern Europe," covers the following topics: (1) "Towards a general theory of transition" (including transition as a transformation of the social and political system, as a state of anomie, as an historical trend, and as a process of societal learning); (2) "The transition from dictatorship to democracy: models, myths and realities"; and (3) "The reforms in Central and Eastern Europe: unity in diversity." Part 2, "Transition as an educational project," speaks to the following issues: (1) "Ideological changes and educational consequences"; (2) "Strategies and priorities: four case studies" (including Hungary, Poland, the Czech and Slovak Republics, and Romania); and (3) "The education legislation of transition" (including rectification measures, modernization measures, and restructuring measures). An extensive bibliography concludes the report. (EH)

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Educational policies of the countries in transition

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Educational policies of the countries in transition

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The **Council of Europe** was founded in 1949 to achieve greater unity between European parliamentary democracies. It is the oldest of the European political institutions and has 32 member States,[1] including the 12 members of the European Community. It is the widest intergovernmental and interparliamentary grouping in Europe, and has its headquarters in the French city of Strasbourg.

Only questions related to national defence are excluded from the Council of Europe's work, and the Organisation has activities in the following areas: democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms; media and communication; social and economic affairs; education, culture, heritage and sport; youth; health; environment and regional planning; local democracy; and legal co-operation.

The **European Cultural Convention** was opened for signature in 1954. This international treaty is open to European countries that are not members of the Council of Europe, and it enables them to take part in the Organisation's programmes on education, culture, sport and youth. So far, 40 States have acceded to the European Cultural Convention: the Council of Europe's full member states plus Albania, Belarus, Croatia, the Holy See, Latvia, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine.

The **Council for Cultural Co-operation** (the CDCC) is responsible for the Council of Europe's work on education and culture. Four specialised committees – the Education Committee, the Standing Conference on University Problems, the Culture Committee and the Cultural Heritage Committee – help the CDCC to carry out its tasks under the European Cultural

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1. Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom.

Convention. There is also a close working relationship between the CDCC and the regular conferences of specialised European ministers responsible for education, culture and cultural heritage.

The CDCC's programmes are an integral part of the Council of Europe's work, and, like the programmes in other sectors, they contribute to the Organisation's three over-arching policy objectives for the 1990s:

– the protection, reinforcement and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and pluralist democracy;

– the promotion of an awareness of European identity;

– the search for common responses to the great challenges facing European society.

The CDCC's education programme covers school, higher and adult education, as well as educational research. At present, its main priorities are projects on: the European dimension of secondary education; university co-operation; adult education and social change; modern languages; and the pooling of the results of educational research.

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Reforms, crises and transitions in Central and Eastern Europe

A term has recently been given currency to denote a new geopolitical reality: **the countries in transition**. Although the expression usually refers to former communist countries, a closer analysis shows that transition is in fact a **universal historical phenomenon**. All societies, civilisations and nations have, at some point in their development, changed their mode of government, property system, the division of power, political paradigms and ideas, attitudes and mentalities, social relations and institutions, way of daily life, etc. In short, it can be said that every individual, social group or community has been and is perpetually in transition from **one thing to another**.

Furthermore, the flow of life is but a constant succession of changes or transitions: from one age to another, one social status to another, one way of life to another, one occupation to another, etc. This has led some authors (Adams, Hayes and Hopson, 1976) to define transition as **a permanent state of discontinuity in personal and communal life**.

Yet, when one speaks of **post-totalitarian transition** and countries which are about to experience it (**"the countries in transition"**), one is thinking of a much more complex phenomenon. It is an historical stage whose duration is impossible to determine at present and which will lead to substantial transformations in every domain: political life, the economy, culture, education, social structures, international relations, etc.

This differentiation from the routine transitions of everyday life is insufficient, however. In fact, most countries of the world are at present in various states of transition, so the very term **countries in transition** requires a specific definition. The

three following factors are therefore of particular interest to us:

a) **the starting-point** or **initial state** of transition;

b) **the destination** or **the objectives** pursued;

c) **the actual content of transition**, i.e. the **derived** transformations.

In our case, it would seem obvious that the starting-point of transition is totalitarianism, the destination liberal democracy and the necessary transformation the passage to political pluralism and the market economy. This scheme is, however, much too simple to provide answers to all the possible questions. Here are a few examples: Do all totalitarian countries have the same starting-point and are they embarking on transition at the same time? Are the stages, duration, means, strategies and constraints the same for all "countries in transition"? Are these countries condemned to perpetual transition, given that the "point of arrival" will itself not remain constant? Does transition mean only a state of discontinuity and rupture or also a state of stabilisation and continuity? Is transition limited to simply transplanting western historical experiences and models to societies with a different social, political and mental configuration? Is the objective "pure" capitalism or rather a variant of western liberalism? Is there a third way which is neither communism nor capitalism, something quite different, a way hither to unknown in history? What is the actual content of transition: political and economic reform or an amalgam of intersectorial transformations?

In-depth analyses are required in order to answer these questions. Furthermore, a proper understanding of the **education policies of the countries in transition**, which is the principal object of our work, is impossible without these kinds of preliminary analyses. For this reason, before making an analysis of educational reforms in the countries in transition, we will

first discuss the social, political and psychological context of those reforms. Thus the first part of this paper will consist of three chapters. The first chapter will attempt to outline the elements of a **general theory of transition**. The second will deal with the unprecedented historical experience of **the transition from totalitarianism to democracy**, while the third will deal with the heterogeneous casuistry of the "**countries in transition**" from a both unifying and diversifying standpoint.

1. Towards a general theory of transition

"Nothing is more convenient than a good theory," said Kurt Lewin. This assertion seems to apply very well in our case too. Why do we need a theory of transition? There are three possible answers to this question. Firstly, such a theory would help us to understand more fully ban unprecedented historical phenomenon that will probably dominate the last years of this century. Secondly, it would enable us to find better solutions for the reforms in countries which are already, or will soon be entering, the phase of post-totalitarian transition. Thirdly, the theory of transition would help the Western world to understand a phenomenon it awaited for a long time but for which it was totally unprepared.

In what follows we will attempt to construct a parallel theory based on four lines of analysis, which are four dimensions of a theory of transition:

a) the passage from one social and political system to another;

b) the anomie which accompanies this change;

c) the historical trend of the transition from communism to capitalism, and

d) the processes of societal learning which support this change.

1.1. *Transition as a transformation of the social and political system*

For some people, when the word "transition" refers to a transformation as radical as the passage from dictatorship to democracy it is simply a euphemism. They regard this not as a mere transition but as the reversal of a system.

This idea is very clearly expressed in a metaphor used by Roman Duda, Poland's Deputy Minister of Education, at an international symposium[1], when he said that, in the final analysis, the post-communist countries found themselves in the impossible situation of trying to reconstitute the egg from the omelette.

Indeed, the post-communist transition involves the transformation of a system of government which was operated for more than half a century over a fifth of the earth's surface by a quarter of its population, into its exact ideological, political and economic opposite. This dramatic passage from dictatorship to democracy is becoming far more difficult than it appeared in the euphoria of the astonishingly easy and rapid political changes of 1989. Directly or indirectly, it has influenced all generations, institutions and social groups. We should not be surprised by the fact that, a few years after the official abolition of communism, there persist collectivist mentalities and reflexes, egalitarian utopias and populist attitudes, militancy, collective fear and hatred, unconditional submission of the individual to the providential leader or the ruling party. The former captive countries are, it is true, returning to Europe, but they are weighed down by totalitarian experiences and structures whose residual effects will be felt for a long time to come.

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1. "Stand der Bildungsreform in Mittel- und Osteuropa", Loccum, 20-22 March 1992.

In order to have a better understanding of the magnitude of the change of paradigm with which the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are faced, we will review the principal differences between **totalitarian society** and its political, economic and social opposite, namely the **open society**. These differences are shown in table 1.

Table 1

THE TOTALITARIAN SOCIETY	THE OPEN SOCIETY
1. Collective interests, represented by the infallible **single party**, prevail over individual choices or interests. Being required to defend the conquests of the proletarian revolution and protect the socialist society from the harmful influences of decadent capitalism, the **Party-State** has the right to control the personal lives of individuals or social groups.	1. The State safeguards the individual's **political, economic and civic freedoms. Private enterprise** is the key to economic and social dynamism.
2. **Legislative, executive and judicial powers** are all in the hands of the Party-State.	2. Legislative, executive and judicial powers are **separate**.
3. **The ruling party**, as the holder of absolute truth, is the only legitimate political institution.	3. There is an open, competitive **electoral system** comprising several different parties.
4. According to **democratic centralism**, bottom-up criticism may not contravene party discipline or disturb the social order.	4. The government cohabits with **the opposition**, which has the right and the duty to criticise and amend official decisions.

THE TOTALITARIAN SOCIETY	THE OPEN SOCIETY
5. The means of production belong to the socialist State, which plans and organises the whole economy in accordance with collective interests and needs. **Centralised socialist planning** is a superior form of economic and social organisation.	5. Production, trade and consumption are regulated by the law of supply and demand, by the **free-market** economy. The State guarantees the individual's **right to ownership**.
6. **The rights of organisation, association and expression** are accepted only within the organisations controlled by the Party and the State. **Civil society** is annihilated and suppressed	6. Individuals enjoy freedom of expression and association in independent groups, institutions and organisations, even if they are opposed to the government. **Civil society** is actually encouraged by the government.
7. There is only one "scientific" conception of the world, *viz* **Marxist-Leninist ideology**, which controls the entire "superstructure": science, art, education, morals, spiritual life.	7. The individual may choose whichever **conception of the world** which he considers best suited to his aspirations and interests. This conception may be either secular or religious.

As the table shows, we are faced with two asymmetrical and mutually incompatible models, one of which is to replace the other in a relatively short period of time. Each of the components mentioned above presupposes its own reform so that transition in fact means a **set of interdependent economic, political and social reforms**.

Some of these reforms have already been initiated, others are still in preparation. Most of the countries under discussion started with **constitutional reforms** in order to realise one of the prime objectives of transition, namely **the passage from Party-State to a State governed by the rule of law**[1]. Whether one refers to the "Charter of Fundamental Rights and

1. According to Dahrendorf (1991, p. 98), the adoption of the first post-totalitarian Constitution marks the real beginning of transition or of the "crossing of the wilderness".

Freedoms" of Czechoslovakia (1991), the revised Hungarian Constitution (1989) or the new Constitutions of Romania (1991) and Poland (1991), certain common objectives can be identified: the safeguarding of fundamental rights and freedoms; the separation of powers; the establishment of new public authorities; the guaranteeing of political pluralism and private ownership. It is true that these trends differ slightly from one country to another, particularly as regards the mechanisms for their implementation (in this connection, see Schwartz's comparative analysis, 1991).

Political reforms were also introduced fairly quickly. They concerned particularly the following measures:

a) the constitution of the first nuclei of **civil society** (non-governmental organisations, free trade unions, professional associations, consultative groups, alternative sources of information, etc.);

b) the re-establishment of **traditional political institutions** (political parties, government, opposition, parliament);

c) the organisation of the first **free elections** since Yalta.

These objectives were realised in the first year of transition.

The other reforms of transition (**economic reform, social reform, moral reform, educational reform**, etc.) are taking place much more slowly[1]. In some cases, indeed a period of stagnation of reforms can be observed, the aim of the new authorities being **economic stabilisation and arresting the deterioration in the quality of life** rather than reforms as such (Tyson, 1991). Most of the countries studied are still in the first phase (Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Albania, the Baltic States), while others (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia) are at the intersection between stabilisation and restructuring.

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1. Although political and constitutional reforms can be brought about within a few months, says Batt (1991, p. 75), economic and social reforms require several years, while moral and educational reforms take decades. This assessment should be borne in mind for our later discussion of educational reforms.

Let us draw a further comparison relative to this thesis. It concerns the **transition from the Nazi dictatorship to democracy** in post-war Germany. This example was used by Dahrendorf (1991) in his analysis of post-communist transitions. He identified a common phenomenon, namely the time-lag between economic reform and constitutional and political reforms. The latter were effected just as quickly as in the post-communist countries (within two or three years), while the "German economic miracle" managed by Ludwig Erhard took place only at the end of the 1950s, with the first effects of monetary reform and the permanent replacement of the "Reichmark" by a convertible currency, the "Deutschmark".

The same time-lag between reforms is also to be seen in the post-communist countries. We will deal with **educational reforms** and their relationship with the transition reforms in the second part of this study. **Economic reforms** are still at a very early stage, certainly trailing behind constitutional and political reforms. Tyson (1991, pp. 46-47) identifies three possible causes: the immense foreign debt, dependence on energy supplies and a foreign trade structure predominantly directed towards the requirements of a deregulated and uncertain market, that of the former Comecon.

Despite all these strategic delays or zigzags, a programme of economic reform has been instituted in all the post-communist countries, and its broad outlines correspond to the conditions laid down by the International Monetary Fund:

a) rapid re-balancing of public expenditure, principally by the abolition of subsidies;

b) liberalisation of prices and lowering of customs barriers;

c) gradual convertibility of national currencies;

d) abolition of exchange controls on current payments;

e) strict monetary policy with high interest rates;

f) harmonisation of production with demand;

g) creation of new businesses that are more competitive on the international market;

h) reactivation of traditional markets;

i) reduction of the foreign debt;

j) gradual privatisation by: the re-establishment of land ownership; the extension of small-scale privatisation, which concerns small and medium-sized assets; the beginning of the large-scale privatisation of major "socialist" companies by total or partial sale, direct or indirect restitution to former owners, the sale or free distribution of shares, stakes in mixed-economy companies, etc.

1.2. *Transition as a state of anomie*

At this point in our analysis it would be useful to consider how all the austerity measures and reforms just mentioned are received by the individual, because when one speaks about the transformation of the social system, and about models and revolutions, ideologies and macro-economic approaches, there is sometimes a danger of forgetting the subjective dimensions and moral aspects of these changes.

According to existentialist psychology (Jaspers, Max Scheler, Rickert), man is always in a situation of insecurity and anxiety which is amplified by the loss of a number of relative certainties and points of reference or by too rapid a change in the direction of life. This is what Durkheim called **the state of anomie**, i.e. the situation individuals find themselves in when the social rules guiding their existence lose their force, become mutually incompatible or, under the impact of certain social changes, have to be replaced by others. Since the individual always needs a stable social framework in order to feel secure, when this changes too abruptly without immediately

being replaced by another, a **moral vacuum** is created. This is expressed by a state of axiological disorientation and affective insecurity, by a lack of perspective, by anxiety about the future and by certain types of deviant and erratic behaviour.

The concept of anomie first put forward by Durkheim was taken up by Thomas and Znaniecki, who, in a famous study on the state of anomie among Polish peasants who had immigrated to America, said that this state of mind is in fact expressed by two types of effects: "demoralisation", which is the individual aspect of anomie, and "institutional disorganisation", which is its social aspect. The first case involves the apathy of individuals leading an aimless life devoid of any apparent meaning, limited to day-to-day existence. In the second case, anomie leads to the deterioration of basic social institutions - the family, the working group and the ethnic community. Later, Merton added to the theory of anomie by emphasising the disillusionment of an entire anomic generation. Subsequently, Parsons described the four principal signs of anomie: (a) lack of clear objectives; (b) uncertainty regarding criteria of conduct; (c) conflicting expectations; and (d) the absence of well-established symbols.

When western analysts try to identify a rationale for the post-totalitarian transition, they are often struck by the state of abnormality, the apparent collective madness and moral disintegration and the feeling that "everything is possible" in this world which has run out of control.

Some observers have even made interesting comparisons between the psychology of the post-communist transition and the mood of the Weimar Republic – an unwanted, unsuitable democracy imposed after a military defeat. As we know, the "Weimar syndrome" led to the appearance of the pernicious idea of the "iron fist" and the "magic saviour" capable of pulling the country out of stagnation and decadence.

In the case of the post-communist transition, we believe that the causes of anomie are:

a) The elimination of the **overall regulator** (the Party-State and its repressive apparatus), without it being replaced with a self-regulating mechanism: the revolutions merely destroyed or weakened the **coercive machinery** without introducing **participatory machinery in its place**.

b) The destruction of the social pact with the Welfare State which, in return for political and civil allegiance, ensured minimum subsistence to every individual. Without this **tacit guarantee** on the part of the government, without the protective **paternalism** of the all-powerful Sate, the individual feels exposed and abandoned and faced with an uncertain future. He responds to these real or imaginary threats by aggression, suspicion and general opposition. All this leads to the accentuation of the state of anomie and to the impossibility of achieving a minimum consensus.

c) **The absence of plausible alternatives** and, worse, the prevalence of distrust towards the new order and its institutions. As the gap between expectations and realities, between promises and results, between official rhetoric and immediate observations widens, so the **degree of anomic disorganisation** of post-totalitarian society increases. The signs of this anomic disorder are axiological disorientation, weakening of social cohesion, nostalgia for the pre-revolutionary order and even surrender of the idea of democracy.

d) **The paradoxical coexistence of old and new structures** employed in parallel, without any political or moral distinction. Thus, without re-assimilating the rules of self-regulation by competition, the individual has assimilated the new rhetoric of liberalism, but he prefers to abide by the old kinds of social relations: he wants freedom, but knows nothing about the new democratic institutions; he aspires to capitalist abundance, but does not want to give up the superficial style of work peculiar to socialism; he asks for economic rights and

freedoms, but does not want to be involved in the management of companies; he demands the right to ownership, but without initiating the liberalisation of prices; he demands free elections but, when it comes to it, he does not care who is elected.

Transition also means something else. It is what the ancient Greeks called a situation of "**Krisis**", a decisive state of reappraisal, a moment of reflection, doubt and retrospective assessment which happens periodically in the life of the City. While anomie, as we have seen, is an attitude of disenchantment and affective insecurity, "Krisis" is the mobilisation of individual and collective consciences to overcome the malaise and enfeeblement of moral life. The individual is not overwhelmed by the hazards and vicissitudes of any "*interregnum*". He seeks new certainties, new psychological references, new social codes, new sources of legitimacy. Thus **Krisis** is not only a questioning of fundamental meanings, a review of and break with the past, but also a form of social mobilisation in support of a new collective project. This process, which consists of the emergence of new collective meanings, the re-establishment of symbolic references and the reconstruction of institutional foundations is part of what can already be called **the culture of transition**[1]. Educational reforms, as we will see later, are an indispensable instrument in this construction of the culture of transition.

1.3. *Transition as an historical trend*

Transition is composed not only of an individual, personalised and subjective period, but also of a social and historical period. Seen from the standpoint of collective historicity, the entire evolution of humanity is simply a series of transitions, a

1. For a more thorough study of this subject, we recommend: C. Goldfarb, *Beyond Glasnost: The Post-Totalitarian Mind*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989.

continuous movement whose events and facts have no meaning unless they are related to **a trend of history**. This is the central thesis of Hegel's theory of development, whereby, for example, the trend of history is the movement of the spirit towards freedom. Humanity passes through many stages on this long advance towards freedom of spirit. Each stage has a meaning, not in itself, but in relation to the preceding and succeeding stages. These **successive transitions** are the result of the contradictory nature of each historical stage which contains the seeds of progress towards the next stage. More exactly, each stage is defined by its own antinomies, its own contradictions: (a) between identity and change; (b) between the single and the multiple; (c) between quantity and quality; and (d) between continuity and discontinuity.

Let us examine the historical trend of post-communist transition in this light.

To our knowledge, there are at least five valid historical interpretations on this subject.

1. According to the first approach, the fall of the iron curtain is equivalent to the **end of history** (Fukuyama, 1989). Western democracy now fulfils all the requisite conditions for becoming a universal system, so that historical development will lose its initial meaning.

It is not impossible that widespread liberalism marks the end of a political cycle; that does not, however, mean the end of the cycle of civilisations. Let us take just one example. It is possible that over the next few years Asian liberalism (Japan and the countries of the "Dragons of Asia") will become the other pole of an antinomy opposite western liberalism. Although most European analysts tend to ignore it, there is already in industrialised Asian countries a hybrid resulting from the crossing of economic liberalism and an authoritarian political strategy. Furthermore, things may become more complex when the "bamboo curtain" of Asian communism

falls. We, for our part, are convinced that the fall of this second and last curtain, if and when it comes, will in no way mark "the end of history" proclaimed by Francis Fukuyama.

2. Let us now turn to the second theory which holds that the post-totalitarian transition is essentially a **return to history** (Brzezinski, 1989). The countries of Central and Eastern Europe were diverted from normal development against their will by communism, and this produced, on the historical scale, a discontinuity (all the more patent for being imposed) in relation to their previous development. The local effect of this was to freeze political and social life for almost half a century. As in the tale of the Sleeping Beauty, these countries are now awakening, emerging from a long hibernation and, after finding the second wind of the 1989 revolutions, are finally returning to historical normality.

3. As for the third theory, it is that of **post-industrial convergence** (Pye, 1966; Black, 1966; Huntington, 1968). It borrows a Leninist thesis according to which modernity resides essentially in industrialisation. As a result, so it was believed, when both the western liberal democracies and the "popular democracies" of Eastern Europe reached the same objective – the establishment of industrial society – it would finally become possible for the Soviet system to become more ideologically flexible by giving up its expansionist military policy; the system would in this way be better able to co-operate with the West to resolve global problems connected with post-industrial society. We should note in passing that history has not confirmed this theory, which was rooted in an atmosphere of benevolence towards Brezhnev's normalisation. The abolition of communism is not due to a smooth, mutually accepted passage from coercive industrialisation to the single post-industrial society. It is due to the system's notorious inability to cope with economic, ideological and military competition, which was the West's trump card for years.

4. The fourth theory is probably the most attractive one. Unfortunately, it cannot explain everything. According to this theory of **the diversion of modernity** (Di Palma, 1990; Field, 1974; Besançon, 1977), communism came into being as a doctrine of salvation, in other words as an alternative to the pernicious effects of modernity: the homogenisation of forms of social life, alienation, the cult of reason, the dissolution of traditional institutions, a non-conformist morality, etc. From this point of view, the Communist Party's Manifesto (1848) can be read as one of the first anti-modern programmes.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, when Russia was still in the pre-industrial era, this doctrine of salvation found a favourable terrain and notable support in the anti-western and anti-modern attitude of the traditionalist, slavophile intelligentsia.

Later, thanks to the success of the Soviet revolution, communism became a **programme for the acceleration of history**, a system of **social mobilisation** making it possible rapidly to fill the gap between Russia and the countries of Western Europe. When one thinks about it, the infamous "campaigns" of emerging Stalinism (electrification, industrialisation, collectivisation, literacy) were part of a perfidious strategy aimed at short-circuiting the industrial revolution that the West had achieved centuries before. At the time, this programme seemed effective, whatever its cost in terms of human lives. In reality, what was happening was what foreign observers called the "Soviet paradox" (Bialer, Ulam) which reached its apogee in the 1980s. The industrial revolution happened, it is true, in record time. Despite, or because of, that, neither the well-being of the population nor the socio-political structures of a modern society really took shape. The Soviet Union remained a pre-modern society while enjoying the formidable prerogatives of a military superpower.

From this point of view, the central objective of the post-communist transition is to recover the lost trend of history

and rejoin the normal path of modernity that the Soviet schism had vainly hoped to avoid, or even thwart and eliminate as an historical reality.

5. Finally, we come to the fifth explanation of the historical trend of transition, which is, to our mind, the most interesting one: **the theory of integration in the modern global system** professed, on the one hand, by neo-liberal authors such as Myrdal (1958), Hirschman (1962) and Wallerstein (1974) and, on the other, by theoreticians of modernity such as Nisbet (1969), Tucker (1977) and Xenos (1989). These authors, who are essentially so different, have in common the fact that they affirm the existence of a modern global system able to adjust local and regional malfunctionings by means of a mechanism similar to that of the market economy. They see this as a mode of global interaction which reacts promptly to every imbalance, be it internal or external. In order to facilitate their integration into the **world-system**, the industrial societies should in their turn become increasingly competitive and flexible, not only as regards economic dynamism but also in terms of their ability to adapt social and political structures. According to this theory, the pressure of the modern global system on the Soviet bloc began to be felt during the 1980s. Thus the abandoning of certain spheres of influence and the trying out of a number of limited reforms can be seen as the system's desperate attempts to save itself. The Gorbachev phenomenon and the 1989 revolutions are the most direct consequences of this.

Viewed from this angle, the post-totalitarian transition cannot be reduced to a mere phenomenon of reorientation under the influence of a new ideology or another model of development. It means above all the end of self-isolation and the downfall of a model of polarisation which placed two antagonistic worlds opposite each other. Henceforth, these worlds are required to co-exist within a complex system able to multiply centres of power and perform its regulatory

functions from within. In any event, this interpretation seems more optimistic, as it seeks to integrate the countries of Central and Eastern Europe into a global historical movement. In the final analysis, this trend cannot fail to accelerate the transition and reduce its social costs.

1.4. *The transition as a process of societal learning*

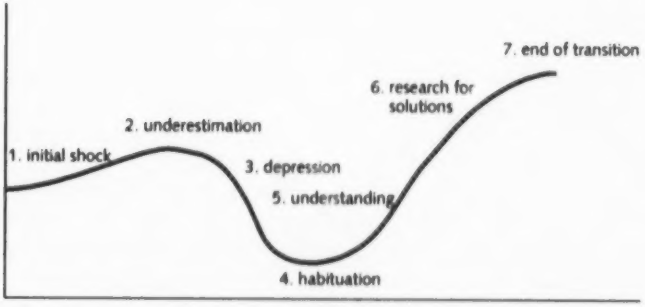
Glancing through the fairly abundant literature devoted to post-communist transition, one is struck by a degree of political and economic reductionism. Analysts are more at home in the ramifications of the struggle for power and in matters of economic redeployment in the various countries than in the, perhaps less spectacular but nonetheless essential, world of mentalities and attitudes, institutional and ideological change, renewal of values and social relations – as though perfectly proper political decisions or well-adjusted liberal programmes were alone sufficient to effect automatically and simultaneously the necessary transformation regarding individual and collective competences.

In reality, the transition is proving more difficult than had been supposed, and that is because the population's need for the societal learning was underestimated if not ignored.

A Club of Rome report (Botkin, Elmandjra, Malitza; 1979) refers to a chronic lack of apprenticeship affecting the whole of humanity is noted. This lack becomes flagrant in times of crisis. In so far as they define learning as a process preparing people to cope with new situations (p.8), the authors of the report are right in stating that there is such a thing as "societal learning" particular to groups, institutions and organisations. Some of the problems societies are faced with at present arise from the fact that they do not want, or do not know how, to manage the process of societal learning. They demand adaptive-reactive behaviour from the individual when they should be trying to stimulate anticipative-participative behaviour, particularly at a time of historic crisis.

Learning in societies in transition could be depicted as follows:

Fig. 1 - The phases of transition



We are working with a model of transition borrowed from Hopson (1984, p. 139): this model dealt primarily with current transitions and their effects on human behaviour. According to this model, every transition, as a rule, consists of seven phases: (1) the initial shock which produces a reaction of stagnation; (2) underestimation due to the fact that the effects of the change are belittled; (3) discouragement and lassitude once reality is accurately perceived; (4) habituation to the new situation; (5) understanding of the meaning of the change; (6) the search for solutions, particularly for a strategy to overcome the crisis; (7) the end of the transition. The decisive moment is the passage from phase 4 to phase 5, i.e. from habituation to the crisis to an understanding of its meaning, from stagnation to action, or from resignation to change. It is precisely at this critical point that most post-communist countries find themselves today: they are desperately trying to pass this dangerous threshold of discouragement

and stagnation. But in the absence of an accurate understanding of the meaning of transition, the dangerous threshold will never be crossed for want of a strategy for social mobilisation.

To achieve this objective, the **political culture** of the population must play an important part. It consists of a set of images, representations, values and basic knowledge concerning the functioning of political institutions, the relationship between the individual and a State governed by the rule of law, economic and political democracy, etc. According to a definition taken from Brown and Gray (1979, p. 1), political culture lies in the subjective perception of history and politics, beliefs and basic values, the focal points of identification and loyalty, the knowledge and expectations which are the result of the historical experience specific to nations and groups.

In short, it is what Vaclav Havel called "the rehabilitation of politics and the learning of democracy".

The need for societal learning in the post-communist countries could be dwelt on further. It is an interesting, topical problem which is outside the scope of this study. We will, however, come back to the subject in the second part of the study when we cover the problems of societal learning through the educational policies of the countries in transition.

2. The transition from dictatorship to democracy: models, myths and realities

One of the words most used at present in the countries in transition is "**model**". This is due to the desire of the new authorities to learn from the experience of other young democracies as well as to their hope that the "crossing of the wilderness" can be shortened simply by means of a well-chosen model.

One cannot help noting, however, that systematic analysis of models of transition is fairly rare. Thus we believe that, even in our clearly defined context, it would be useful to review the best-known models of transition which are at present guiding the new decision-makers of Eastern Europe. We will use three sources for this purpose: Milenkovitch (1991), Comisso (1991), Karl and Schmitter (1991).

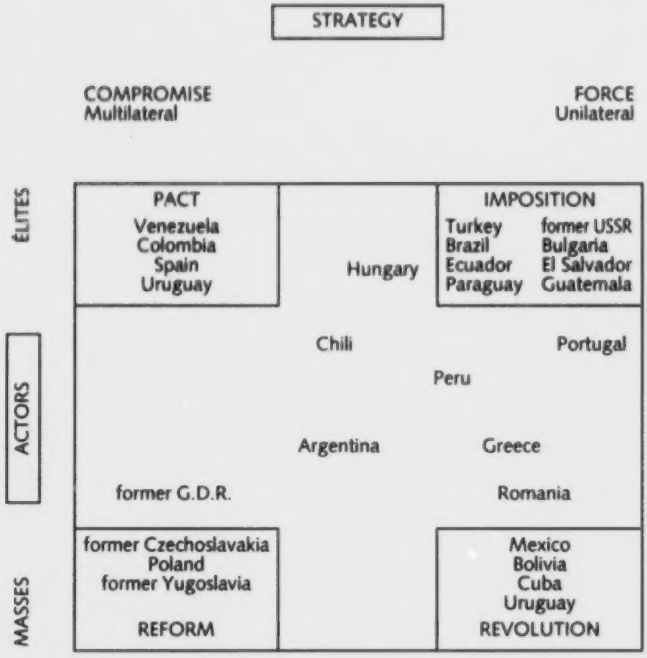
The first-named takes the following models into consideration: the passage from an authoritarian style to western democracies, the Marshall Plan, the peaceful transitions in Korea and Latin America, the model of the "poor relations" of the European Community (the transitions in Southern Europe) and the model of the "rich relation" (the "*Einschluss*" at work in German reunification).

The second author places greater emphasis on the Hungarian model ("The New Economic Policy" at the beginning of the 1980s), the French model (the policy of the mixed economy promoted by the socialist government), the Swedish model (based on monetarist regulation of the market), the "third way" model and the well-tempered Thatcherite model.

Finally, Karl and Schmitter concentrate on four modes of transition from dictatorship to democracy: (a) **the pact**, assuming that the élites reach a compromise; (b) **imposition**, when the élites resort to force to establish a new political system; (c) **reform** following a bottom-up movement favourable to political and social change; (d) **revolution**, when it is the population that imposes change by violence. Figure 2, which we have taken from Karl and Schmitter (1991, p. 276), brings out the combinations giving rise to the four models mentioned: compromise-force; élites-masses; players-strategies; unilateral actions-multilateral actions. Applying this grid to the transitions that have taken place in Southern Europe, Latin America and Eastern Europe, Karl and Schmitter identify the following typology: (a) passage to democracy following agreement within the political élite (Venezuela, Colombia,

Uruguay and Spain); (b) democracy imposed from above (Turkey, Brazil, Ecuador, Paraguay, Guatemala, Salvador, the former USSR and Bulgaria); (c) transition through bottom-up reforms (Poland, former Czechoslovakia, former Yugoslavia); (d) transition brought about by revolution (Mexico, Bolivia, Cuba and Nicaragua). The composite cases are not without interest: transition by pact and imposition (Hungary and Chile), by revolution and imposition (Portugal, Greece, Peru and Romania), by pact and reform (former GDR).

Fig. 2 - The modes of transition from dictatorship to democracy



Among the models examined by Milenkovitch (1991) and Comisso (1991) as well as by other writers (Di Palma, 1990; Hankiss, 1990; Lescourne and Lecomte, 1990; Roskin, 1991; Ekiert, 1991), the **New Marshall Plan** and the **Third Way** are most frequently mentioned. The first is regrettably more a wish than a reality. Its realisation, moreover, is far off. The factors involved are the international situation (the exorbitant cost of German reunification and the Gulf war, the economic recession in the West) and the unmanageable scale of such a plan: according to data supplied by the International Monetary Fund, for production and living standards to be harmonised in the two parts of Germany by the year 2000, it would cost 1,133 trillion US dollars, which would mean allocating 66,000 US dollars **per capita** per year for 10 years. A similar programme for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (excluding the former USSR) would cost 732 billion US dollars **per capita** over 10 years. This far exceeds the resources the West has at its disposal for assistance purposes.

Envisaging the third way (neither communism nor unrestrained capitalism) amounts basically to accepting several ways, if not several models. Three of these are:

a) **The social market economy** (*"soziale Marktwirtschaft"*) conceived by Ludwig Erhard and his adviser Alfred Müller-Armack. According to Dahrendorf, this model was created for the specific conditions of post-war Germany and presupposes clauses which it would be difficult to implement in the post-communist countries: powerful, co-operative trade unions participating in the management and preservation of social peace; charismatic political leaders able to act as a catalyst of national consensus; modern infrastructures; a skilled and disciplined workforce; American financial aid.

b) **Social catholicism** was launched by the famous encyclical of Pope Leo XIII (*"Rerum Novarum"*, 1891). It developed as an alternative social doctrine to liberalism, thanks mainly to Luigi Sturzo. Refusing both liberalism and socialism, social

catholicism pleads for moral control of the market: giving trade unions consultative power over the State; dividing the great landed estates among poor peasants in return for the legal compensation of the owners; carrying out administrative decentralisation; enhancing of the Catholic Church's role in the "social question" and bringing workers who had been tempted by Marxism and other materialist doctrines back to Christianity. The model of social catholicism was adapted to the post-communist transition in the encyclical *"Anno centessimo"* by Pope John Paul II in 1991.

c) **The Swedish model** worked well between 1930 and 1970; it was characterised by a centralised system of social protection. It was the consensus established between the ruling Social-Democratic Party and the Swedish trade unions that made the model viable. Draconian taxation enabled the State to accumulate capital which was then redistributed among the population in the form of services and investment in human resources (education, health, social protection, communications). The Swedish model was amended in 1975 by the Meidner Plan.

Although the possibility of a third way particular to the post-communist countries is often mentioned, there is so far no sufficiently clear indication that this way has been followed in any of the countries concerned. As Milenkovitch aptly says (1991, p. 159), the countries in transition are not trying to implement a theoretical model but are following a policy of survival. In fact, the third way does not even exist. It is often to be heard in official rhetoric like a myth legitimatising the half-reforms imposed by the specific conditions in which transition is taking place.

Furthermore, because of its unprecedented and, so to speak, "mysterious" nature, transition lends itself fairly well to mythical explanations. Daily situations change so rapidly and unexpectedly that even specialists, let alone the man-in-the-street, are taken by surprise. In the absence of an

appropriate culture and previous experience in this field, explanations based on usual, obvious situations come to be favoured, by dint of repetition, they are transformed into **political myths**:

a) **Basic myths**, on the one hand, seek to promote a facile, axiomatic and universally accessible explanation of the origins of a particular phenomenon. As such the "basic" myth takes account only of the events or arguments which serve to give weight to this or that hypothesis about origins; this results in a scenario that is convincing by its very simplicity. Once embedded in the social imagination, basic myths become very stable and are then difficult to dislodge by rational explanations. Let us give two examples of basic myths connected to the process of transition. The first refers to what might be termed the "Yalta complex". This attributes the current problems in Eastern Europe to an initial betrayal, the work of Roosevelt and Churchill. It follows that the West has a moral obligation to come to the aid of the peoples it abandoned in 1945. The second myth also refers to an historical betrayal, but in the opposite direction: this is the "Malta complex" or the treason of Gorbachev who, it is said, gave in to the victorious West without reason and, what is worse, without obtaining any apparent advantage for the communist countries.

b) **Eschatological myths**, on the other hand, do not refer to the premises or origins of transition but to its future. They look at results, ends and means of overcoming the crisis. Let us take the example of the myth of the "return to Europe": this is supposed to reduce the passage from dictatorship to democracy to an exclusively geographical question. Because they are as much a part of Europe as the Western countries, the ex-communist countries should regard their integration into the "Great European Home" as a matter of political will, not as a question connected with economic, legal and social structures.

It would be interesting to undertake a comparative analysis of the results after four years of post-totalitarian transition. Such an analysis is not, of course, very easy in view of the heterogeneity of conditions, priorities and resources. Notwithstanding this diversity, some common trends are discernible. In what follows, we will attempt to identify their features.

3. The reforms in Central and Eastern Europe: unity in diversity

It is traditional, when speaking of the former "Eastern bloc", to use such expressions as: totalitarian countries, communist or socialist countries (according to the political criterion); countries of Central or Eastern Europe or simply "Eastern Europe"[1] (according to the geographical criterion); the USSR's satellites (according to the geo-political criterion); captive countries (according to the historical criterion); member States of the Warsaw Pact (according to the military criterion) or of Comecon (according to the economic criterion). As can be seen, the designations are fairly varied. They do, however, have one thing in common, which is a tendency to simplify and homogenise a region which is extremely varied from the cultural and historical point of view. The terms "bloc" and "camp", although implying a compact, unitary entity, cover a wide variety of peoples, cultures, languages, religions, traditions and historical experiences.

It should not, therefore, be surprising that the premises of transition present a similar heterogeneity in the countries with

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1. Thus it became possible to regard the East and the West as representing a political polarity. Within this, they were the guarantors of an internal division of Europe, imposed by the *"pax sovietica"* and the Berlin wall. It is interesting to note that Eastern Europe also included the USSR with its Asian zone. This makes it difficult today to define cultural and political Europe as opposed to geographical Europe.

which we are concerned. Let us again look at some examples. Historically speaking, it is true that the transition began in 1989 (the year in which the revolutions broke out in Eastern Europe). It remains the case, nevertheless, that these phenomena, whose importance no one would dare to deny today, were preceded by stages which paved the way for them. There are significant differences in these stages from one country to another. The importance of the post-1989 transition should not be minimised, but it must also be recognised that the dismantling of communism began in fact long before. It fell into three phases:

a) **the post-Stalinist phase** (the 1950s and 60s); Stalin's death was followed by a period of liberalisation characterised by the ideological disavowal of Stalinism and the class struggle;

b) **the post-totalitarian phase** (the 1970s and 80s), when attempts were made to safeguard the communist system "from within" by means of limited reforms; this had quite the reverse effect as the reforms help to speed up the disintegration of communism; it should also be noted that the economic reforms ("goulash" communism in Hungary, "socialism with a human face" in Czechoslovakia, "self-limited reforms" in Poland, "perestroika" in the Soviet Union) were not followed by political reforms;

c) **the post-communist phase** (after 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe and after 1991 in the former Soviet Union); this phase seeks to eliminate the monopoly of the single party and the command economy, which involves reforms in practically every domain.

The fall of Communism occurred in widely differing manners. Some countries, such as Albania, passed directly from "outright Stalinism" to the post-communist phase. Others went from family dictatorship to multi-party democracy, which was the case in Romania, while other countries, like the former

GDR, exchanged "real socialism" for western democracy. Looking at things more closely, it is impossible not to observe that even the half-reforms of the post-totalitarian phase have, in fact, fairly different characteristics. This means that the conditions in which post-communist transition is taking place within the "Soviet bloc" are very far from uniform.

All things considered, the variety of the conditions should result in a **wide variety of styles of transition**. It is generally agreed that post-communist transition passes through five phases:

a) **political rupture** (the political monopoly of the single party is abolished);

b) **the break-up of the old system**, notably by the dismantling of authoritarian structures and police surveillance;

c) **replacement of the old structures** by new ones;

d) **stabilisation of the new system**;

e) **ensuring of its self-regulating capability** by the mechanisms of the free market.

It is true that each of these phases will have a different specific content in each country. Thus the destructive element of transition, corresponding to the first two phases, will have less weight and last a shorter time in the countries that have already undergone economic reforms and adopted more flexible political structures.

However, it would be premature to make suppositions about the duration of transition[1]. At present there are three certainties: (a) the reforms initiated in ex-communist countries are irreversible; (b) they affect all domains; (c) post-communist transitions are now in a phase of restructuring-stabilisation,

1. According to optimists (Lesourne and Lecomte, 1990), the transition will last two decades, whiles pessimists (Dahrendorf, 1991) see it as lasting 60 years.

however different their premises may have been. This is why, after four years of transition, the **results** are nonetheless comparable. An outline is to be found below which is based on a grid borrowed from Reszler (1992, pp. 12-13):

a) Despite its amorphous nature, society is gradually being reconstituted. Although no new class has been formed, **the renaissance of a voluntary sector** can be seen as the necessary prelude to its future restratification.

b) **New élites** are being formed, including in their ranks the technocratic élites of the old communist system.

c) A new **pluralistic political system** is being established.

d) The **private sector** of the economy is to a certain extent offsetting the failings of a command economy that generated shortages and is rapidly disintegrating. In the more or less long term, the **privatisation programmes** under way will ensure the passage from a planned economy to an efficient and prosperous market economy.

e) **The rule of law** is replacing institutionalised arbitrariness.

f) **A number of statesmen** of exceptional stature are leading the new (weak) governments whose primary quality is at present their legitimacy.

What is the role of education in all these changes? Are educational systems simply underlying the impact of political, economic and social reforms or, on the contrary, are education and training important vectors of these reforms? Can educational reform be initiated before the political and economic reforms have stabilised the system as a whole? Is education really a national priority, as the new public authorities claim? To what extent have ideological changes influenced educational policies in the countries in transition?

These are the main questions we will attempt to answer in the second part of our paper. We will examine first the educational consequences of the ideological changes in the post-communist countries. We will then deal with the difficult question of priorities and strategies, basing ourselves on four case studies. We will conclude with a comparative analysis of the new laws on education in the countries in transition.

1. Ideological changes and educational consequences

Everybody agrees that the Soviet revolution imposed a new conception of education. With the birth of the popular democracies after Yalta, the "Soviet model" became "East European" or "socialist". Based on a simplifying outline (like all reasonings deriving from Marxist-Leninist dogma) this model regarded education as a tool of official ideology and macro-social planning. Education was to provide the workforce demanded by the command economy. It was also to create the "new man" and the "socialist personality" by inculcating in the younger generation the only "scientific" conception of the world, namely Marxism-Leninism.

Table 2 contrasts the principal characteristics of **communist education** and the **liberal education** adopted by Western societies.

Table 2

COMMUNIST EDUCATION	LIBERAL EDUCATION
1. The objective of education is **collectivist socialisation**. The Party-State offers **equal educational opportunities for all**: the same objectives, the same school, the same curricula, a single textbook.	1. Education is a **universal human right**. Individuals are different by nature and need a **tailor-made education**. Instead of forced equalisation of performances, the educational system seeks to promote **equality of opportunity**.
2. Universal truth is one and immutable; **Marxist-Leninist ideology** is its guarantor; it is a sort of meta-science which holds the undisputed and undisputable monopoly of absolute knowledge and infallible social action. Based on this ideology, **communist education** is unquestionably superior since its aim is to create the **new man**, an elect being whose historic mission is to complete the socialist revolution.	2. There is no **single truth**, and no one claims to hold a monopoly on knowledge and social action. Education is duty-bound to respect **cultural, political, ideological and religious pluralism**.
3. The individual is above all a **productive force**. Consequently, education will be organised in such a way as to provide a **workforce** in conformity with **socialist planning**, particularly for heavy industry, the energy sector and agriculture. Educational objectives are subordinate to the economic and ideological objectives of the Party-State.	3. The individual cannot be reduced to the level of a docile mass workforce; he is not a mere producer of material goods but both a **producer and consumer of culture**. His material existence is subordinate to a system of moral and spiritual values that can be formed and completed by education.

COMMUNIST EDUCATION	LIBERAL EDUCATION
4. Education is **one of the forms of the superstructure**. As such, it is always dependent on the level of development of the material base (the means and mode of production). All the forms of **social awareness** (education, science, art, philosophy) are subordinate to social existence.	4. Education means emancipation and permanent creation; the educated individual **is able to free himself from immediate material conditionings**. Educated people are better able to understand social issues; they are more open to social participation and have a critical sense which enables them to improve their own living conditions.
5. **Education by and for work** is superior to bourgeois education of an intellectualist, speculative kind. Pupils' and students' productive work makes it possible to eliminate the élitist division between intellectuals and the working class by simultaneously abolishing the difference between physical and intellectual work. **The cult of work** is the supreme value of socialism.	5. Work is only one among many human activities. Education is first of all a **learning process** different from the activities which make up the world of work; the differences are due to motivation, aims and means. Productive work is not significant in itself but only in relation to all the values particular to democratic society.
6. Education is based on a highly structured social system; the individual is not an autonomous entity but an integral part of stratified structures (State, party, work collective). **Education in and by the collective** is superior to individualistic, egoistic and élitist forms of education.	6. Every learning process must involve **direct individual experience**. The best way to learn is by personal research, critical analysis and individual enterprise. The basic unit of the education system is **the individual** and his interests as a whole.

Immediately after the upheavals of 1989, in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and in 1991 in the former Soviet republics, the **Soviet model** of education was discarded at the same time as communist ideology and the monopoly of

the single party. This was immediately followed by a series of rectification measures which prevailed for the first two years of transition. These measures sought to abolish the worst aspects of communist education: political indoctrination and atheistic propaganda; the ideological monopoly of the ruling party; the primacy of polytechnic education; compulsory work by pupils and students ("practical instruction"); paramilitary training of the young; strict control of institutions and individuals; forced uniformity, etc.

In the absence of a comprehensive programme capable of integrating them, these *ad hoc* measures were limited in scope and of a spontaneous nature, usually being imposed by various pressure groups: teachers, pupils and students, parents, trade unions, the media, professional associations, ethnic groups, the political opposition, etc. These emergency measures correspond to the first two of the phases of transition we identified above (**political rupture** and **disintegration of the old system**). As for the constructive components of transition (**change, stabilisation and self-regulation**), their implementation will doubtless be more difficult and will in any case be longer.

An indispensable condition moving resolutely on to actual reforms is **the definition of a new educational policy**. During the still very recent period of the Party-State, **the principles and objectives of communist education** were set out in the five-year plans of socialist development. From time to time, the party held congresses to debate educational problems, and on these occasions new educational policies were decided on. These instructions were immediately relayed by the legislature and the executive in concert, who endeavoured to implement "party decisions".

At present, following the disappearance of this system which functioned from the top downwards in the most mechanical fashion, the societies in transition are having to draw up new education policies by themselves. They must also devise their

own decision-making bodies and appropriate operational machinery.

For this purpose, most of the countries under discussion here have started to prepare "white papers"[1] concerning their education systems. Committees of experts joined by senior officers and scientific and educational researchers are engaged in the task. The principles and objectives proposed by the reform programmes are, broadly speaking, those that usually characterise any liberal educational programme.

It is true that priorities vary according to the particular conditions of each country. However, the catch words of the new educational authorities seem everywhere to be **democratisation, decentralisation, liberalisation and the introduction of pluralism**. A principle to be found in the reform programmes of several post-communist countries (Poland, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus) might be added to this list. This principle – **the humanisation of teaching** – may seem strange in the context of education. In fact, "humanisation" here means shifting the emphasis from education for all to education for every individual and moving from the collectivist approach and the levelling of individuals to the differentiated treatment which allows the individual

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1. To our knowledge, the following have so far been prepared: *"Education as a National Priority"*, Warsaw, PWN, 1989; G. Yagodin *"Towards Higher Standards in Education through its Humanization and Democratization"*, Moscow, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1989; F. Rečnik *"Education in Slovenia for 21st Century"*, Ljubljana, ZSS, 1991; J. Kotásek et al. *"Réflexions sur l'école et l'enseignement en République Tchèque. Propositions d'un groupe d'experts"*, Prague, Charles University, Faculty of Education, 1991; G. Halász, P. Lukács *"Educational Policy for the Nineties. These for a New Concept of State Educational Policy"*, Budapest, Hungarian Institute for Educational Research, 1991; *"White Paper of Education and Science"*, Sofia, Ministry of Education and Science, 1992; C. Bîrzea et al. *"Educational Reform in Romania: Conditions and Prospects"*, Bucharest, Institute of Educational Sciences, 1993.

and his needs to become the cornerstone of a new educational policy.

This denotes a genuine change of outlook in that it is no longer a question simply of replacing one set of educational slogans by another: this change presupposes a new ideological reference system of a far more complex and "human" kind than Marxist-Leninist collectivism.

This classification leads us to open a debate which goes beyond the objectives we set ourselves but which is nonetheless unavoidable: does post-communist transition embody the end of ideologies as Daniel Bell was already proclaiming in the 1960s? Or, on the contrary, will the crisis of Marxist-Leninism lead to the rehabilitation of the term "ideology", which had become so debased by an improper usage tinged with exclusivism?

In the totalitarian societies the ideology of the single party was omnipresent and infallible. Standing above the sciences and the arts, ethics and philosophy, this ideology held the supreme criterion of truth, good and beauty. The education system was disguised and operated in all its aspects according to the norms and interests of totalitarian ideology; the ideology weighed upon the ends, objectives, structures, contents, methods and means of education. Consequently, when Marxism-Leninism left the stage, there was an ideological vacuum in the schools and universities which needed to be filled by other conceptions of the world. Archaic ideologies which were current at the beginning of the century (panslavism, ethno-nationalism, orthodoxy, social catholicism and peasant ideology) are already rushing in to fill the space abandoned by all-powerful Marxism. Anti-capitalist and anti-western ideologies are also racing towards this wilderness (traditionalism, populism, neo-marxism and fundamentalism).

A more detailed analysis shows that the new educational policies in the countries in transition seem to be based on four major non-communist ideologies: **liberalism, nationalism, Christian democracy and social democracy**.

Their pedagogical expressions are **progressiveness, perennialism, essentialism and reconstructionism**, respectively.[1]

Table 3 – Countries in transition: educational policies and their ideological foundations (see below)

1. For all details concerning these major teaching trends, the following sources may be consulted: G.F. Kneller *Enseigner-Apprendre-Pourquoi? Une introduction à la philosophie de l'enseignement*, Paris, Nouveaux Horizons, 1974; A.C. Ornstein *An Introduction to the Foundations of Education*, Chicago, Rand McNally, 1977; W.F. O'Neil *Educational Ideologies*, Santa Monica, Goodyear, 1981.

POLAND	
Principles	1. Transforming education into a national priority. 2. Changing the relationship between the individual, educational institutions and the State. 3. Adapting teaching to the development of other sectors. 4. "Humanising" the education system.
Priorities	1. Abolishing the State monopoly on teaching. 2. Promoting the reform of curricula and textbooks. 3. Abandoning comprehensive education. 4. Promoting the reform of vocational education. 5. Developing alternative schools. 6. Transforming the system of initial training for teachers. 7. Stimulating the teaching of foreign languages. 8. Democratising higher education.
Ideological foundations	Neo-liberalism and Christian democracy.

HUNGARY	
Principles	1. Adapting teaching to economic and social changes. 2. Involving all social groups (experts, parliamentarians, decision-makers, practitioners, parents, students). 3. Stimulating individual initiative and bottom-up reform. 4. Re-evaluating relationships between individuals, educational institutions and the State. 5. Cultivating traditional pre-war values (connected with religion, authority, the nation, the family and public morality). 6. The principle of academic freedom and the freedom of education.
Priorities	1. Accepting the need for recentralisation after the excessive decentralisation that followed the 1985 Law. 2. Transforming educational structures; eliminating unitary structures and hierarchical links; giving a greater place to vocational training. 3. Reforming curricula so as to: - set national standards; - liberalise the textbook industry; - change the system of assessment; - develop local variations of curricula (at school level). 4. Developing private education and alternative schools. 5. Enhancing the role of colleges in higher education. 6. Financial independence and autonomy of schools.
Ideological foundations	Liberalism of local authorities in relative contradiction with the neo-traditionalism and Christian democracy of central government.

CZECH AND SLOVAK REPUBLICS	
Principles	1. Encouraging cultural and ideological pluralism. 2. Abolishing the State monopoly. 3. Encouraging the academic freedom of institutions and freedom of choice for the individual. 4. Extending the market principle to educational services.
Priorities	1. Decentralising educational administration (involving local authorities in the management of the State fund). 2. Improving the quality of teaching, particularly in comprehensive schools. 3. Establishing religious schools, alternative schools and private schools. 4. Replacing the unitary structure of secondary education by establishing different types of secondary schools. 5. Introducing the self-management of schools. 6. Discarding the single textbook. 7. Encouraging the acquisition of vocational qualifications at both secondary and higher level. 8. Encouraging freedom of choice in the new curricula. Accepting the existence of local variants. 9. Promoting the independence of universities. 10. Involving parents in the running of schools.
Ideological foundations	Neo-conservatism (in the Czech Republic) and nationalism (in the Slovak Republic).

ROMANIA	
Principles	1. Principle of the reform: no "cosmetic" improvements but radical reform. 2. The principle of coherence: - harmonisation of ends and means; - establishment of the logical sequence of the transformations; - harmonisation of educational reform and the other transition reforms; - encouragement of consensus among all social groups. 3. The principle of functionality: maintaining the equilibrium and operational state of the education system without sacrificing the present generation of pupils and students. 4. The principle of self-regulation: improving the education system's capacity for self-innovation and development.
Priorities	1. Democratising the education system (vertical and horizontal democratisation). 2. Improving the quality of teaching. 3. Enhancing the social role of education.
Ideological foundations	Social democracy and the "social-market economy" (the ideology of the third way).

BULGARIA	
Principles	1. Education is a priority of transition. 2. Redefining the State's role in the management of education. 3. "Humanising", democratising and individualising of the education system.
Priorities	1. Reinforcing the autonomy of educational institutions. 2. Removing ideology from school programmes. 3. Returning to pre-war moral and religious values. 4. Modernising the entrance system for higher education.
Ideological foundationss	Social democracy and neo-traditionalism.

ALBANIA	
Principles	1. Adapting teaching to political, economic and social changes. 2. Using teaching as a vector of social change and emancipation of the population. 3. Accepting the need for wide-ranging reform. 4. Promoting the renaissance of national culture.
Priorities	1. Removing ideology from school curricula. 2. Improving teachers' status. 3. Raising learning standards in secondary schools (particularly in basic disciplines). 4. Extending pre-school education to 85% of the children in that age-group. 5. Extending the length of school education from 8 to 10 years. 6. Stimulating the reform of vocational education (reducing its duration and simplifying career paths).
Ideological foundations	Social-democracy and nationalism.

SLOVENIA	
Principles	1. Adapting teaching to the perennial values of democracy. 2. The principle of "reform of the reform" (rectifying an ill-conceived reform of the 1980s). 3. Implementing the principle of ideological, cultural, ethnic and social pluralism. 4. Implementing the principle of academic freedom.
Priorities	1. Drawing up a new national curriculum. 2. Improving the quality of secondary education. 3. Re-establishing the tripartite system of secondary education. 4. Developing education in rural areas as a priority. 5. Enhancing the role of civics and social sciences. 6. Changing the balance between the theoretical, pedagogical and practical components of initial teacher-training.
Ideological foundations	Neo-liberalism.

CROATIA	
Principles	1. Reinforcing the national education system to meet the new political and administrative situation in the country. 2. Affirming the national identity through education. 3. Making the educational system more efficient both internally and externally.
Priorities	1. Returning to an élitist model of secondary education (highly selective specialised secondary schools). 2. Promoting vocational training. 3. Providing a common core of subjects for all forms of secondary education. 4. Organising the first alternative schools. 5. Improving initial teacher training. 6. Introducing religious instruction in schools.
Ideological foundations	Christian democracy and nationalism.

ESTONIA	
Principles	1. Developing national awareness and culture. 2. Constructing a national education system. 3. Democratising and humanising education.
Priorities	1. Decentralising. 2. Studying the national language and culture. 3. Increasing the social role of education (particularly at the higher level). 4. Introducing elective subjects in secondary education.
Ideological foundations	Nationalism and liberalism.
LATVIA	
Principles	1. As the official language of the new State, Latvian is compulsory for all citizens. 2. Emphasising the universal values of democracy as well as traditional pre-war values.
Priorities	1. Producing textbooks in the national language. 2. Promoting the reform of vocational education. 3. Defining national standards to replace the present single-discipline curricula. 4. Encouraging the learning of Western languages.
Ideological foundations	Christian-democracy and nationalism.

LITHUANIA	
Principles	1. Promoting the renaissance of national culture. 2. Democratising the education system. 3. Eliminating the utilitarian and materialistic approach to education and reorienting it towards spiritual life, culture and pre-war values.
Priorities	1. According a greater place to the national language, history and geography of Lithuania. 2. Humanising the curriculum as a whole. 3. Establishing the first alternative schools. 4. Modernising educational management.
Ideological foundations	Nationalism and liberalism.

RUSSIA	
Principles	"The Ten Commandments" of the new education in Russia. Principles: 1. Democratising 2. Decreasing the role of the State 3. Regionalising 4. Favouring self-determination 5. Promoting an outward-looking approach 6. Humanising 7. Universalising 8. Diversifying 9. Focusing on the needs of the child 10. Continuing
Priorities	1. Defining a new federal system that is flexible and suited to specific regional and national conditions. 2. Removing ideology from curricula and textbooks. 3. Reforming secondary education. 4. Adapting curricula to the needs of the market economy. 5. Restructuring educational administration. 6. Transforming the functions and structures of higher education.
Ideological foundations	Liberalism.

UKRAINE	
Principles	1. Cultural pluralism 2. Democratising and humanising education. 3. Promoting the renaissance of national culture.
Priorities	1. Transforming the structure of secondary education. 2. Fostering the study of the national language. 3. Orienting curricula towards the moral and religious values prevailing before the Soviet revolution
Ideological foundations	Nationalism and neo-traditionalism.

BELARUS	
Principles	1. Establishing a new education system. 2. Affirming national identity through education. 3. Humanising and democratising education.
Priorities	1. Fostering the study of the national language. 2. Developing education in rural areas. 3. Computerising secondary education.
Ideological foundations	Nationalism and neo-traditionalism.

MOLDOVA	
Principles	1. Restoring the national language and culture through education. 2. Modernising education and fostering its openness to the values of European culture.
Priorities	1. Replacing the Cyrillic alphabet by the Latin alphabet. 2. Introducing the new alphabet in school books. 3. Training Romanian-speaking teachers. 4. Modernising educational management.
Ideological foundations	Nationalism.

In the above table we have tried to group together the major trends in educational policies in the post-communist countries and relate them to the ideological foundations as emerging from official documents. An analysis of the table leads to the following conclusions:

a) All post-communist countries are adopting, at least in official pronouncements, one or another of the western ideologies. This represents an abrupt swing of the ideological pendulum which Galbraith has called "rush to capitalism". Of course, this swing will be slower and more contradictory in terms of structures, institutions and daily relationships.

b) Contrary to the situation in Western societies, nationalism is a powerfull ideology in Central and Eastern Europe. It is proving particularly influential in the new republics of the former Soviet Union and former Yugoslavia, which wish to create national education systems based upon national cultures and languages.

c) In addition to the values of Western democracies, there is a quest for original formulas based on the traditions and values the societies of Central and Eastern Europe cultivated before the second world war. It is not therefore surprising to find even in educational reform programmes various themes relating to the renewal of religious feeling, the family and public morality.

2. Strategies and priorities: four case studies

The above table, although providing an overall view of educational policies in the countries in transition, gives no details of the strategies, priorities and constraints of each country. We therefore felt it necessary to offer a more detailed analysis in certain cases. To this end, we have selected four countries where the debates concerning educational reform are particularly interesting and significant. They are Hungary, Poland, the Czech and Slovak Republics and Romania.

2.1. *Hungary: "reform of the reforms" and the problem of continuity*

Hungary began to introduce a number of reforms before the other ex-communist countries, so that the problems it is experiencing have certain distinctive characteristics. In fact educational reform in Hungary began in the 1970s. Since then, it has gone through three phases (Halász, 1992a and 1992b; Bathory, 1992b; Szebenyi, 1992b; Darvas and Tibbits, 1992):

a) **The establishment of the first alternative schools in the 1970s.** Although these schools were simply variants of the Marxist school, they accommodated the idea of pluralism by demonstrating that the single school was not the only possibility.

b) **The reform of curricula as from the 1978-1979 academic year.** Applied in the same context – political control of the party and ministerial bureaucracy – this reform distinguished itself by the fact that it depoliticised school history syllabi, modernised the content of basic subjects and introduced elective subjects.

c) **Administrative decentralisation and school autonomy after the 1985 Education Law.** Although the law stipulated the maintenance of the "framework of legislative provisions and centralised educational curricula", schools acquired the right to define their own teaching objectives, draw up local variants of educational structures, develop their own curricula and elect school principals. Under the provisions of the same law, teaching staff became "the most important consultative and decision-making body in education".

These reforms were regarded as unsatisfactory in the post-1989 political context.

Following the example of Slovenia, the new Hungarian authorities propose to bring about a "reform of the reforms", notably a reform correcting the half-measures of the earlier reforms (Kozma 1991).

The problem of continuity does not present itself in quite the same way in Hungary as in the other countries in transition when the attitude towards the reforms of the period of "goulash communism" is considered. The supporters of discontinuity claim that these reforms kept the 8 + 4 structure established in the 1960s. The new economic circumstances have caused the appearance of structural tensions which particularly affect secondary education. In three years, for example, vocational training has been severely and directly affected by the closing of the large industrial enterprises connected with Comecon.

Many disputes on the theme of continuity/discontinuity were provoked by the publication of the proposed new law on education (October 1990), conceived by a team of politically neutral experts. The debates on the draft law had the effect of polarising government and opposition on the subject of educational policy. The government favours recentralisation and, in support of its view, alleges that the effects of the 1985 law were anarchy and disorder. The opposition, on the other hand, claims that the education law should not deal with these questions, its objective being to regulate relations between individuals, the local community, educational institutions and the State.

Since then, another committee of experts has been appointed, which has produced other draft laws and a new law was adopted in July 1993.

Notwithstanding these differences at the top, the policy of decentralisation and liberalisation of the 1980s has already borne fruit. While the disputes continued in parliament and the ministries, important changes have occurred at local level.[1]

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1. To give an idea of the scope of this bottom-up reform movement, it should be added that, over a ten-year period, more than 25% of the schools in Hungary applied for the special subsidy available for experimental schools.

According to Halász (1993, p.8), a wide range of innovations are emerging which might constitute a genuine preliminary to reform:

a) Reorganisation of the curriculum leading to an internal 2 + 2 division in some secondary schools.

- Introduction of optional subjects for detailed or specialised study in the last two years at school.

- Curricular experiments resulting in an internal 2 + 2 division in vocational schools (general subjects in the first two years + specialised subjects and practical training in the last two years).

- Introduction of technician training in some vocational schools with an internal 2 + 2 + 1 division (general training + vocational training + specialised training leading to a technician's qualification).

b) The organisation of preparatory "O" classes in bilingual schools.

c) The opening of lower classes in some secondary schools admitting children at the age of 10 (return to the traditional pre-war eight-year secondary school) or 12 (creation of a new type of six-year school).

d) The opening of higher 9th-year and 10th-year classes in some general schools.

In short, while the political authorities wasted their time and energy in interminable debates about continuity and discontinuity, stability and change, the practitioners pursued further the reforms begun in the 1980s. Although they do not have any coherent and clearly co-ordinated policy, these partial, local changes constitute a starting-point for a comprehensive, generally accepted reform.

2.2. *Poland: can educational reform be a priority of transition?*

As in Hungary, the need for post-Stalinist reforms made itself felt in Poland as early as the 1970s. However, the course of events brought these reforms to a halt in the 1980s.

When Gierek came to power in 1970 a programme of rapid development in every domain was launched. To carry through educational reform, a committee of experts was set up under the direction of Jan Szczepanski. It had a twofold objective: to analyse the Polish education system and propose a reform programme. In 1973 the committee presented its report entitled "The state of the educational system in Poland".[1]

Two priorities were emphasised in the report: (a) the equalisation of educational opportunity for children from different social backgrounds; (b) the abolition of the clear separation between different paths in secondary education (which was responsible for the very limited access to higher education – only 20% of secondary school students). The Government did not agree to these priorities and decided to institute its own reform plan centred on two major objectives:

a) to increase the length of compulsory education to 10 years;

b) to restructure the curricula.

It was principally the first objective that met with opposition from teachers, who at that time formed a powerful branch of "Solidarność". Their resistance bore fruit as the "structural reform" was suspended and only the reform of curricula was retained.

In accordance with the tradition of Polish society, along side the official curricula introduced in 1986, which were deemed fairly liberal by Marxist-Leninist standards, an alternative cur-

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1. *Rapport o stanie oswiaty*, Warszawa, PWN, 1973.

riculum was able to operate. This "hidden curriculum" was the result of a tacit agreement between the Party, the Catholic Church and liberal intellectuals. This explains why it was possible to teach in Polish schools in ways other than those stipulated in official documents (Glenn, 1991; Janowski, 1992).

The "Solidarnoość" teachers even published a clandestine journal, *Edukacja i Dialog*, in which they gave pride of place to non-conformist educational literature.

In January 1987, Prime Minister Messner nominated a committee of experts co-ordinated by Czeslaw Kupisiewicz; it had more or less the same objectives as the Szczepanski Committee. Ironically, the final report, "Education as a national priority",[1] was submitted to another Prime Minister (Mazowiecki) in October 1989, a few months after the famous "Round Table" which led to the first post-communist government in Central and Eastern Europe.

These critical analyses brought the problems of education in Polish society to the forefront. The 1989 Report deals with education in terms of a national priority, as did the participants in the Round Table. The latter recommended allocating a minimum of 7% of national revenue to education.

What happened in reality? The under-financing of education has made the idea of a "national priority" a dead letter. Whereas prior to 1989 the education budget represented 7-8% of national revenue, it fell to 5% in 1989 and 3.1% in 1991 (Lewowicki, 1992, p.14).

Despite this, Polish experts have not ceased to believe that educational reform is destined to become a priority of transition (Mieszalski and Kupisiewicz, 1992; Kozakiewicz, 1992; Bugaj, 1992). In October 1990, the Ministry of Education

1. *Edukacja narodownym priorytetem*, Warszawa, PWN, 1989.

launched a programme-document[1] setting out the new priorities of educational policy for the next few years:

a) **Abolishing the State monopoly of education**. Even before 1989, Poland was the only European communist country with a private Catholic university (at Lublin) and about ten Catholic high schools. Since 1989, the growth of private education in Poland has been spectacular: the number of "social" or "communal" schools (other than Catholic schools) rose from 32 in 1989 to 200 in 1990 and 500 in 1991 (cf Kozakiewicz, 1992b, p. 244). It is local communities, with the financial help of parents (50%) and the State (50%), that have set up these schools. It may be noted that the proportions of financial assistance are different in Hungary: 30% from parents, 70 % from the State. The private schools have, it is true, opened a breach in the State monopoly, but they still have few pupils: barely 20,000 out of 7 million pupils in Poland.

b) **Changing curricula and textbooks** in response to the requirements of the market economy and political pluralism. It is no longer purely academic education that should be predominant but a training centred on the **know-how** demanded by modern life. As for vocational training, it is believed that a new division (two years of specialist training) would be more appropriate to social imperatives.

c) **Modernising teacher-training**. The aim is to update general training in educational psychology (the most important task of the three-year teacher-training course) and encourage the teaching of subjects lacking in Polish education (western languages, for example).

Clearly, this structure of priorities reduced to three objectives is more modest than the range of priorities characterising similar programmes in other countries. Is this to be seen as a

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1. *Priorytety edukacyjne w Polsce*, (Educational Priorities in Poland). *Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny*, 1991, No. 2, pp. 181-184.

sign of greater pragmatism or as the acceptance of an unpleasant reality which is preventing educational reform from becoming a priority of transition?

2.3. *The Czech and Slovak Republics: the policy of structural adjustment*

Before the new educational policy in the Czech and Slovak Republics is looked at, an essential preliminary remark must be made. While the influence of neo-conservatism is tending to decline in the countries where, in the 1980s, it dominated educational policy (the United States, United Kingdom and Japan), many post-communist countries are impatient to pass from "scientific" socialism to the opposite extreme of ideological discourse, namely radical liberalism. Consequently, we should not be surprised by the predilection shown by ministers and experts, at least in their pronouncements, for "pure" liberalism of a highly doctrinaire and economistic kind in the wake, as it were, of the "Chicago School".

It is not unusual for this ultra-liberal orientation to result in the market principle being extended to most social services. In education, it has given rise to the following measures:

a) taking advantage of competition, diversity and individual choices to improve the quality of teaching and particularly the means employed;

b) enhancing vocational training in both secondary and higher education;

c) decentralising and preparing the partial disengagement of the State;

d) encouraging institutions to become autonomous.

These are the characteristics of the educational policy pursued in the Czech and Slovak Republics. In both countries, but particularly in the former, the official opting for neo-conservatism is having an effect on all reforms.

As the Czech and Slovak Republics want to become part of western economic structures as soon as possible, they must rapidly achieve the standards of performance of their future partners. Education must be restructured in such a way as to avoid any obstacle in the equivalence of courses or the process of specialisation, given the requirements of the integrated economic market. It was for this reason that, after being placed on the well-known rectification measures (ending indoctrination, rewriting history and civics textbooks, increasing the number of hours devoted to foreign languages), the emphasis has now shifted to **structural adjustment** measures. According to Prucha (1992a and 1992b), von Kopp (1992), Walterova (1992a and 1992b), Parizek (1992) and Hendrichova (1992), these measures have the following objectives:

1. Ensuring structural pluralism and the diversification of education:

a) abandonment of the unified structure of the education system so as to permit the creation of different types of secondary schools;

b) preservation of the comprehensive school (which other post-communist countries have dropped), while improving the quality of teaching;

c) reduction in the length of compulsory education from 10 to 9 years;

d) making the State responsible again for the organisation of vocational training (initially, the State delegated the control of vocational schools to companies, although many of them were on the brink of bankruptcy);

e) foundation of the first private or Church schools (in 1991 there were 7 private schools and 9 private Church schools; all these schools are free to design their own curricula);

f) provision of alternative schools based either on non-conformist teaching methods (Waldorf, Freinet or Petersen)

or on the traditional 8-year "Gymnasium" receiving children at the end of their primary education, which lasts 5 years.

2. Drawing up a new curriculum giving more emphasis to options. Since the introduction of self-management for schools in 1990, schools have enjoyed much greater freedom as regards the curriculum: almost 20% of the timetable is left to their discretion.

3. Liberalising the educational market and abandoning the single textbook.

4. Decentralising educational administration and encouraging school autonomy.

It is important to point out that the proposed reforms came from various sources and professional circles, all of which are in favour of **structural adjustment**, for example: (a) a group of experts from the Faculty of Education of the Charles University, Prague, under the chairmanship of Professor Jiri Kostasek; (b) the NEMES working party, consisting of independent teachers and researchers; (c) IDEA, the orientation group for the market economy; (d) the Association of Teachers of Mathematics and Sciences; and (e) the committees for the reform of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport.

It should further be noted that the policy of structural adjustment was also encouraged by a team of experts from the World Bank, who recommended the following measures: (a) a reduction in the number of pupils in specialised apprenticeship centres financed by the State; (b) an increase in the number of pupils in upper-secondary schools; (c) greater financial responsibility for establishments; (d) the introduction of fees in higher education.

The question remains as to whether structural adjustment is a hazardous, premature policy in the present conditions of transition. Such reservations have already been expressed in other parts of the world, and the conclusion has always been the

same: structural-adjustment programmes help rich countries and further impoverish poor countries.

This is the point of view of, among others, von Kopp (1992, p. 102), who points out in relation to the structural-adjustment policy in the former Czechoslovakia that the tendency to transform education from a State service into a competitive system subject to the laws of supply and demand is risky. Although well placed compared to other post-communist countries,[1] says von Kopp, the former Czechoslovakia remains a poor country in which any monetarist approach is problematic to say the leas. Furthermore, when nationalist agitation upsets the course of events, market education based on neo-conservatism runs the risk of becoming a source of social unrest. According to a similar assessment (Kozma, 1990 and 1991), the liberalisation of the educational market in Hungary at a time when the level of impoverishment of the population is extremely worrying is clearly premature

It goes without saying that these warnings should not lead to the erroneous idea that liberalism in itself is not yet appropriate to the societies in transition. They simply forearm us against the temptation of further doctrinaire extremism and the risk of blindly imitating western models.

2.4. *Romania: systemic reform and its constraints*

The common feature of the first three years of transition in Romania has been, to be frank, **the absence of a coherent educational policy**. The new authorities have restricted themselves either to rectification measures for the old education system, or to negotiations with trade unions over the

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1. According to Unesco's Statistical Yearbook (1991), Czechoslovakia allocates 5.2% of its GNP to education while Bulgaria allocates 6.9%, Hungary 5.6%, Poland 4.4% and Romania 3.12%. In any case, almost all post-communist countries have reduced their education budgets. The least that can be said is that this downward trend contradicts the promise to make education a 'priority of transition'.

remuneration of teaching staff. It is economic and financial questions that have dominated the various government programmes since December 1989. Education was regarded as a relatively stable sector, even as an efficient and competitive one compared with European educational systems. Public debates were for the most part concerned with educational legislation, hence the tendency to reduce the problem of reform to the adoption of a new education law.

In January 1993, the Institute of Education was asked by the government's Committee on Co-ordination, Strategy and Reform to prepare a "white paper"[1] on the educational system in order to:

a) analyse the situation of education in Romania to identify, among other things, the obstacles in the way of reform;

b) take stock of the principal developments of the first three years of transition;

c) draw up a new educational policy and a strategy for educational reform.

The report shows that, after a long period of marginalisation and under-financing, Romanian education has reached a **critical threshold** beyond which it is the cultural and educational level of the country which is at risk. If the present generations continue to ignore this risk, they will assume an immense responsibility *vis-à-vis* future generations.

Confronted with this alarming message, the Romanian Government has reacted by increasing the education budget slightly and launching a reform programme. This is undoubtedly a step forward, but it is insufficient. There is now an education policy, but the necessary resources are still lacking.

For this reason, the Romanian authorities have chosen to promote a strategy which consists in mobilising all resources

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1. Under the direction of C. Birzea, *Educational Reform in Romania: conditions and prospects*, Bucharest, Institute of Education, 1993.

around a common programme piloted by the institutions coming under the Ministry of Education. This is what specialists (Smith and O'Day, 1991) call a "**systemic reform**". The key elements of this strategy are:

1. The introduction of a **reform mechanism** and structures which, being implanted in the old system, are able to foster change (what is usually described as "**reform by infusion**"). At every level of the public administration, reform support centres have been established. Every ministry and its regional structures have a reform department. This is not entirely without risk since there might occur an artificial division of the administration. There would thus be the "reformers" and the "others", those who plan the reform and those who must apply it.

To prevent such a division, the Ministry of Education has decided to broaden the institutional machinery of the reform. This comprises:

a) the National Council for the Reform of Education, consisting of leading intellectuals closely interested in educational questions (Mr Liviu Maior, the Minister of Education, is its Chairman);

b) the regional reform agencies attached to teachers' centres;

c) the experimental schools (the first alternative schools organised by the Institute of Education).

2. The mobilisation of the various **social groups** in support of a number of common objectives (politicians, teachers, experts, parents, unions, students and pupils).

3. Using the **efficient sectors** and **centres of excellence** of the education system in order to activate its capacity for self-innovation and self-development.

There still remains a significant unknown factor in the reform programme thus conceived: will the other sectors of society

as a whole be able to support educational reform? Experience in other countries shows that systemic reform is successful only to the extent that the education system interacts with other social systems that are themselves undergoing reform.

3. The education legislation of transition

What does the picture of educational changes in the post-communist countries look like after four years of transition? It is very heterogeneous. Some countries have continued the reforms begun in the 1970s (Hungary and Croatia) or 1980s (Poland and Slovenia). Others have decided to make a clean break with the structures and mentalities of the old education system and are planning a radical reform (Russia, the Czech and Slovak Republics, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania). Finally, yet other countries intend to build national education systems which take account of the new realities of the former Soviet Union (the Baltic States, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova).

Whatever path is followed, the passage from communist education to the liberal education systems integrated into the late 20th century Greater Europe is proving more difficult than had been supposed. Although they immediately opted for western models and ideologies, the post-communist countries are encountering considerable difficulties when it comes to putting the much-needed educational reforms into operation.

We noted earlier that, on the whole, the first concrete result of transition was constitutional reforms. Similarly, in the field of education transition began with legislative reforms. Thus a majority of the countries under examination passed new education laws in 1991 at the same time as they were establishing new constitutions. The other countries are also at an advanced stage, and new laws on education will very probably be passed before January 1994.

An analysis of legislative changes regarding education leads to the following conclusions:

a) Sometimes the combined weight of bureaucratism and centralism and the sluggishness of top-down reforming impulses result in too much being expected of a new education law. In some countries **the entire problem of reform has been reduced to the drafting of such a law**. This is to forget that not everything can be changed by decree and that the law is only an instrument, a tool of the reform and not *vice versa*. Reform may be introduced by several successive laws or even several complementary laws (laws on pre-university education, the status of teaching staff, higher education, private education, etc.).

b) In some situations **the course of events can outstrip legislative reform**. This was particularly the case during the first year of transition, when the most unacceptable methods of communist education (political control, Marxist indoctrination, polytechnic teaching, etc.) were rapidly eliminated. Now things are no different in the most vulnerable sectors: higher education, private education and vocational education. There, too, change is occurring more rapidly than legislation.

c) This relative delay in legislative reform is due to the fact that an education law is an **institutional law** passed by a majority vote. It requires a minimum political consensus which is sometimes difficult to obtain.

d) In some cases, because of the fluidity and unpredictability of transition, lawyers have introduced a new term which is supposed to supplement the triptych constitutional laws/institutional laws/ordinary laws, *viz* **"transition laws"** which, unlike **"reform laws"**, are aimed at keeping the education system functioning "normally" pending a favourable time for substantial restructuring. And, as the difficulties of transition arise, the following type of argument is increasingly heard: the present measures are, it is said, only temporary

because they are paving the way for reforms properly so-called. This is clearly a fallacious argument which supports the dangerous idea of a "transition without reform". It is thus forgotten that reform is the instrument, not the aim, of transition.

Without going into detail, three types of measures can be identified in the new legislation on education: rectification, modernisation and restructuring measures. We will conclude our study by reviewing these measures.

3.1. *Rectification measures*

These are emergency corrective measures designed to eliminate immediately the most obvious characteristics of communist education. Often taken under the impact of this or that pressure group, they gave a spectacular, "revolutionary" character to the first year of transition. Unfortunately this initial radicalism disappeared subsequently - it was impossible to maintain the same speed of change. In so far as the rectification measures are part of a coherent, long-term strategy, they can be regarded as the first stage of educational reform (corresponding to political rupture and deconstruction as described above). Being unable to go into detail, we will limit ourselves to mentioning the principal rectification measures taken in the course of the first year of transition:

a) The elimination of communist ideology and indoctrination material; the suppression of totalitarian political control over the education system **(in all post-communist countries)**.

b) The replacement, at least in official pronouncements, of communist education by liberal education **(in all post-communist countries)**.

c) The removal of people compromised by their too obvious connection with the old system; the closure of colleges for officers of the Communist Party **(in all post-communist countries)**.

d) The abandonment of the principle of polytechnic education **(Poland, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria and the Baltic States)**.

e) The renewal of history, social science and civics textbooks **(in all post-communist countries)**.

f) The intensification of the study of the national language in the newly independent States **(the Baltic States, Croatia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova)**.

3.2. *Modernisation measures*

Modernising means improving the quality of this or that component of the education system: contents, textbooks, examinations, educational relationships, academic and careers guidance, teaching methods and approaches, infrastructures. Michel Debeauvais has spoken in this respect of "changes without reform", including *ad hoc* innovations which do not affect the institutional and legislative framework of education or its management. Although official utterances sometimes promise "the great reform", many changes have so far been mere modernisation measures:

a) Updating and pruning curricula **(Poland, Bulgaria, Russia, Belarus, Czech and Slovak Republics, Romania, Latvia, Moldova)**.

b) Giving greater emphasis to elective subjects and contents **(in all the post-communist countries)**.

c) Reviewing teaching plans: emphasis on basic skills in primary education **(Poland, Ukraine, Slovenia, Russia, Estonia, Romania)**; developing pupils' general knowledge by concentrating on links between subjects taught at the lower secondary level and on interdisciplinary integration at the upper-secondary level **(Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, Russia, Romania, Croatia, Moldova)**; ensuring a common core of subjects for all sections and types of secondary education

(**Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Latvia, Croatia, Belarus**).

d) Introducing new contents regarding the quality of life: ecology, education for family life, human rights, preventive education (**Poland, Russia, Slovenia, Croatia, Belarus, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Hungary**).

e) Setting minimum standards of knowledge to be acquired by all children (**Hungary, Poland, Russia, Bulgaria, Latvia, Czech and Slovak Republics**).

f) Introducing religious education in schools (**Poland, Russia, Latvia, Lithuania, Croatia, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria**).

g) Making learning more effective by giving more emphasis to active methods and individual tuition; encouraging the application of new computer technologies, school television and multi-media systems (**Hungary, Russia, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Croatia, Moldova, Latvia**).

h) Making special provision for exceptionally gifted and talented children (**Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria, Russia, Czech and Slovak Republics, Moldova**).

i) Fostering the intercultural dimension in new contents and programmes (**Poland, Belarus, the Baltic States, Slovenia, Czech and Slovak Republics**).

j) Reducing the number of pupils per class (**Romania, Poland, Albania**).

k) Reducing weekly teaching loads (**Romania, Poland, Albania, Russia, Bulgaria**).

l) Improving systems of selection, evaluation and examination; using criteria-based assessment methods; emphasising formative assessment (**Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Romania, Croatia, Estonia**).

m) Increasing the study of foreign, particularly Western, languages (**Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia, the Baltic States, Czech and Slovak Republics**).

n) Adapting teacher-training programmes to new educational policies (**Poland, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Belarus, Albania, Romania, Estonia, Lithuania, Moldova**).

o) Abandoning the single textbook and changing the policy regarding textbooks; treating the textbook as a teaching package including the pupil's book, the teacher's book, an exercise and assessment book (**Hungary, Czech and Slovak Republics, Poland, Russia, Slovenia, Lithuania, Croatia**).

p) Updating the list of specialities in vocational training (**Bulgaria, Russia, Romania, Poland, Ukraine, Belarus**).

q) Recognising the right to teaching in the mother tongue for ethnic minorities (**Czech and Slovak Republics, Ukraine, Estonia, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Poland**).

r) Accrediting higher education establishments (**Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Russia**).

s) Re-evaluating the relationship between basic knowledge, specialised knowledge and applications and between compulsory and elective subjects in higher education (**Hungary, Poland, Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, Belarus, Estonia, Lithuania**).

t) Improving recruitment procedures in higher education: greater access to competitive examinations for entry into higher education establishments run by the State; developing private universities (**Romania, Bulgaria, Czech and Slovak Republics, Poland**).

u) Improving the quality of higher education by updating contents and methods, recruiting young staff and applying

exacting criteria in professional promotion (**Czech and Slovak Republics, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Romania, Lithuania, Russia**).

v) Encouraging scientific research in higher education and eliminating the separation between research and teaching (**Bulgaria, Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Czech and Slovak Republics**).

w) Reactivating educational research and involving it in the implementation of reform (**Hungary, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Moldova, Bulgaria, Czech and Slovak Republics**).

3.3. *Restructuring measures*

This is a matter of changing the organisation and functioning of the education system in accordance with a new educational policy. The change concerns:

- the management, administration and planning of education;
- financing and assessment;
- the organisation of the education system (as regards its duration and the links between its cycles and as regards branches, sections and types of educational institutions);
- the legislative framework;
- teacher training;
- the employment conditions of the teaching profession;
- the status of education relative to other sectors of society.

According to the above list, none of the countries examined has moved abruptly and completely to the restructuring of the education system as a whole. There is rather a cautious balance between restructuring measures, rectification measures and modernisation. This will probably allow some alternation between long-term and short- and medium-term objectives. This concomitant and integrated approach of the three types of measures is probably the best strategy of "response to the crisis".

To come back to restructuring measures, it will be noted that they are aimed at:

a) Abolishing the State monopoly over the education system; developing alternative schools **(Hungary, Poland, Czech and Slovak Republics, Russia, Croatia, Slovenia, Baltic States)**; and developing private education **(in all post-communist countries)**.

b) Decentralising the management and administration of education; delegating responsibility to the lower echelons in pre-university education **(in all post-communist countries)**; increasing the autonomy and responsibility of schools **(Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, the Czech and Slovak Republics, Romania, Baltic States, Russia)**; establishing participative managing bodies consisting of local authority representatives, parents and companies **(in all post-communist countries)**; encouraging self-management and the internal organisation of universities according to the principles of parliamentary democracy-eligibility, public responsibility, consensus and wide involvement in decision-making **(in all post-communist countries)**.

c) Increasing the independence of educational management in relation to general administration **(Poland, Hungary, Czech and Slovak Republics)**;

d) Eliminating the intermediate levels in educational administration **(Poland, Czech and Slovak Republics)**;

e) Reorganising Ministries of Education and reviewing the relationship between central and local administration, creating decentralised structures comprising experts and teachers for the purpose of planning and implementing educational reform **(in all post-communist countries)**;

f) Co-ordinating the legislative framework of educational reform **(in all post-communist countries)**;

g) Restructuring the financing of education, increasing the number of sources of finance and adopting modern methods

of allocation and efficiency in the management of funds **(Czech and Slovak Republics, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia)**.

h) Improving the status and general conditions of teachers: remuneration, social prestige, civic and professional rights **(Hungary, Czech and Slovak Republics, Ukraine, Poland, Albania)**.

i) Reorganising initial and in-service teacher training along the lines of institutional diversification; ensuring the specificity of in-service training in relation to initial training; providing minimum psycho-educational training for all teachers; moving from training based on minimum skills to a high degree of vocationalisation **(Poland, Slovenia, Moldova, Belarus, Hungary, Croatia, Czech and Slovak Republics)**.

j) Giving priority to the development of education in rural and less-favoured areas **(Bulgaria, Belarus, Albania, Slovenia, Ukraine, Russia)**.

k) Extending the length and coverage of pre-school education **(Albania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Latvia, Ukraine)**;

l) Reducing the length of compulsory education while stressing the quality of instruction **(Romania, Czech and Slovak Republics, Poland)**.

m) Increasing the length of compulsory education **(Albania, Slovenia)**.

n) Diversifying the institutional structures necessary for the proper functioning of secondary education **(Romania, Belarus, Czech and Slovak Republics, Poland, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Russia, Hungary, Croatia)**.

o) Reintroducing traditional pre-war élitist forms of education **(Czech and Slovak Republics, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia)**.

p) Developing remedial or "second-chance" education for adults denied a proper basic education **(Bulgaria, Albania, Belarus, Baltic States)**.

q) Restructuring vocational and technical secondary education; simplifying training procedures; establishing a common core of general training in all secondary schools; and involving companies in the organisation of practical traineeships **(in all post-communist countries)**.

r) Democratising access to higher education **(Czech and Slovak Republics, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Slovenia)**.

s) Improving links between secondary and higher education as regards content, structures and assessment methods **(Czech and Slovak Republics, Poland, Bulgaria, Belarus, Hungary, Croatia)**.

t) Introducing a vertical differentiation of higher education so as to organise two or three successive academic cycles, each with its own goals and specific diplomas **(in all post-communist countries)**.

u) Eliminating the artificial separation between universities and specialised higher education establishments and between the sections and specialities within one and the same institution **(Czech and Slovak Republics, Hungary, Estonia, Slovenia, Poland)**.

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